

Standing Rules

INTRODUCTION

This document is meant to be used as a supplement and in association with the Thornton Creek Parent Group By-Laws. The Thornton Creek Parent Group shall be known as “The Parent Group” throughout this document.

ARTICLE I. - AFFILIATION

The parent group is a subsection of the Thornton Creek Site Council, and as such shall be affiliated with the Thornton Creek Elementary School at Decatur (A Seattle Public School).

This parent group is organized and will be operated exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The parent group will not carry on any activities precluded by the Internal Revenue Code for an organization exempt from taxation under this section.

ARTICLE 2 — PURPOSE

- A. The parents holding positions on Site Council, attend Site Council meetings and act as the joint-operators of a small business; the non-profit cooperatively-run parent group.
- B. The parent group acts as the fiscal agent to manage and budget fundraising dollars raised by the larger Thornton Creek Community.

ARTICLE 3 — MEMBERSHIP

- A. Any parent or legal guardian ("Parent") of an age-appropriate child enrolled at Thornton Creek, who wishes to participate in the parent group and is willing to accept responsibilities of active participation in the Site Council is eligible. The Parent Group is run by its members, and held to duties as outlined in the Parent Group Bylaws. The participating parent shall hold either a committee position or Board position (See section 8 for committee positions.)
- B. Parents and/or legal guardians, and other family members are eligible to participate as a board or committee member of the Parent Group. Community and local neighborhood family members can attend Site Council meetings, but are not eligible to hold a Parent Group position.

ARTICLE 4 - FINANCES

- A. The parent group’s fiscal year shall run from July through June.
- B. The Parent Group Finance Committee shall prepare annual budget in April, for group review at the May meeting. Site Council shall vote to approve it at the June meeting.
- C. Statement of Tax-Exempt Status: The Cooperative is a non-profit organization and shall be operated exclusively for educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision in any subsequent United States Internal Revenue Law). The Cooperative shall not conduct activities precluded by said Code for an organization exempt from taxation under said Section.

ARTICLE 5 — Scholarships

- A. Each annual budget sets aside a scholarship fund in the Fall. Currently \$8,000 is budgeted each year to meet scholarship needs. Those funds are equally available to each of the 15 classrooms, plus one part is available for all school activities (ie: WA State Archery Competition fees).

If you divide the \$8,000 into 16 parts the all school part is \$500. For the classrooms, it is more equitable to distribute the funds in a per pupil basis (which breaks out to approximately \$24 per student). For example, this provides a room with 25 students an allocation of \$600 in scholarship funds per year.

If an individual room finds that their scholarship needs will exceed the allocated 7.5% of available funds, the teacher can bring a written proposal request to Site Council for approval of additional scholarship funding. In many cases, the funds may be available from rooms that haven't fully utilized their own allotment.

- B. Free & Reduced Lunch Students are available to scholarship benefits as set forth in Seattle Public School District Policy (updated each year). Additionally, Site Council will fund scholarships for Free & Reduced Lunch qualified students (paperwork filed with District) for both Instrumental Music and SC sponsored after school activities.

ARTICLE 6 — INSURANCE

- A. The members of the Parent Group and after-school Site Council-approved activities are covered by an insurance policy. The policy covers legal liability of the cooperative for bodily injury and property damage; and group accident insurance, which covers accidental bodily injury sustained by an insured student. The policy is on file in the office.
- B. Any group wanting to hold after-school/evening meetings or activities at Thornton Creek must fill out an activity registration form and receive Site Council approval before advertising and/or enrolling students for the activity. Groups may fill out and receive approval at the June Site Council meeting for Fall classes and activities.

ARTICLE 7 —Parent Group and Site Council MEETINGS

- A. All Site Council meetings must be open. All meetings during the school year must be held at school. Summer meetings and committee meetings may be held in homes. The entire community must be notified about meetings (including agenda) at least one week in advance.
- B. Parent Group/Site Council meetings shall be held once a month, on the second Tuesday of the month, September through May, to discuss business issues concerning the Parent Group. The dates and times shall be set at the August meeting and posted on the Thornton Creek School website.
- C. The Site Council meeting and planning schedule will approximate that of the Seattle Public Schools in regard to opening, closing and holidays. The first Site Council meeting of the year is in August, and no action items shall be approved at that meeting. The last meeting of the year is in June
- D. Monthly Parent Group meetings are mandatory for the board and committee officers. Membership in the Parent Group will be reviewed by the board following two absences.
- E. **Decision Making:** For Site Council purposes, consensus exists when each member can say (1) "I have had the opportunity to voice my opinions, (2) I believe the group has heard me, and (3) I can actively support the group's decision as the best possible at this time, even if it is not my first choice." When

there is no further discussion on a proposal, the facilitator calls for consensus to determine (1) how many agree and consent, (2) how many disagree with part or all of the proposal but consent, and (3) how many disagree with the proposal and will not consent. If a majority disagrees and will not consent, it must be taken as an indication that the proposal is inadequate. If a minority disagrees and will not consent, the facilitator takes the group through a process of identifying and addressing concerns and, when there is no more discussion, calls for consensus again. If after three attempts at gaining consensus, there are still individuals who do not agree and consent, the Site Council Board may make one of three choices:

1. They may choose to refer the proposal to a committee made up of representatives who support the proposal as well as representatives with reservations. The committee is charged with presenting an improved proposal or alternatives to the proposal at a future Site Council meeting.
2. They may ask the persons with the existing concerns if they are willing to stand aside; that is, acknowledge that the concern still exists, but allow the proposal to be adopted. The unresolved concern is then written down with the proposal in the record and in essence becomes part of the decision.
3. They may agree to abandon the process of achieving consensus and call for a vote. This path is chosen only as a last resort, and when a proposal has a sensitive time frame. At that time only the Site Council Board can vote. For the item to pass it must receive 2/3 of the votes.

All decisions requiring Site Council action will be made within two hours of the start of the meeting, unless the Site Council reaches consensus on waiving the time limit. If the allotted time for a given action item has been reached, the facilitator may declare that consensus cannot be reached at this meeting, that the proposal is blocked, and moves on to the next agenda item.

F. **Agenda:** The agenda of Council meetings will include:

- i. introduction of those in attendance and review of the decision-making procedures as necessary;
- ii. additions to and re-ordering/prioritizing of items on the agenda;
- iii. reports from standing committees, teachers, Program Manager and Principal as necessary;
- iv. old business;
- v. new business;
- vi. establish preliminary agenda for the next meeting.

Committees need report to Council only when there is a need for Council action, or when a report is requested by a Council member. Full minutes of the meeting will be posted on the website and a summary will be put in the next addition of the newsletter. Additions to the agenda may be made through the Council Chair. The agenda will be published in the newsletter and posted online by Thursday of the week before the Council meeting. Copies of proposals under consideration (and background materials if possible/necessary) will be also be available on the website.

Copies of the agenda, meeting notes and hand-outs will be kept in a folder in the library and are available to all members of the Thornton Creek Community.

ARTICLE 7 —BOARD AND OFFICERS

Section 1. Composition

- A. **Parent Group Officers:** The Parent Group membership is represented by eight (8) voting Officers who represent the Parent Group on the Site Council. The Principal Officers of the Parent Group shall consist of the following officers: a Chairperson, Vice Chair, and Treasurer. Each Board member shall have one vote. The Secretary shall be an ex-officio (non-voting) member.
- B. **Staff Representatives:** The eight (8) staff members who are eligible to vote at any one Site Council meeting.
- C. **Site Council Board:** The Board is comprised of eight (8) Parent Group Officers and eight (8) Staff Representatives, all of whom are voting representatives. Parent Group Officers are comprised of three Principal Officers and five additional Officers who are the Chairs of the Standing Committees; teachers are not to be excluded from office or committee coordination, but are not required to hold these positions.

Section 2. Resignation

An officer shall give at least two weeks notice of resignation from the Board.

Section 3. Vacancies

Any vacancy in office shall be announced to the membership, and candidates shall be solicited from the group at large. The Board shall fulfill the officer's responsibilities until the next regular membership meeting, when members shall elect a new officer.

Section 4. Responsibilities of the Board

In addition to duties indicated by the By-Laws, the board:

- A) Plans and advises the Cooperative. The Board is responsible to conduct all routine business between monthly meetings and submit issues and recommendations to the entire membership.
- B) Attends all Board meetings (The specific dates and times to be set by the Board members) and assist in planning the agenda for the parent meetings.
- C) Makes it clear that the Board Meetings are open to anyone in the Cooperative who wishes to observe. If participation is desired, the Chair must be notified in advance for placement on the agenda.
- D) May make emergency decisions on behalf of the membership, including emergency closures; or suspension of the teacher, an officer, or a parent group member due to gross misconduct.
- E) Is responsible for appointing and supervising a teacher selection committee, if needed, to recruit, interview, and hire new teachers.
- F) Encourages members, officers, and teacher to attend professional development workshops and classes. Resolves all disputes brought to it. Participates in Grievance Procedures and Contract for Change/Dismissal Procedures as outlined in Article 4.
- G) Is responsible for recruiting for open positions for the coming year and instate a Board to take office at the close of the current school year, except for the treasurer who goes through June 30th.

Section 5. Selection of Representatives

The Principal is a Site Council representative every year. Classroom teachers will select 8 representatives for each Council meeting on a rotating basis. If a representative is unable to attend, s/he will appoint a proxy.

Parent representatives are selected as follows:

- A. A description of all Site Council positions will be distributed to all parents and teachers by April 1.
- B. Parents may nominate themselves or be nominated by other parents or by staff members;
- C. In cases where there is more than one parent volunteer for a position, elections will be held. A list of available positions and parents who have agreed to be considered for those positions should be finalized by May 1.
- D. If there are positions for which more than one parent has volunteered, ballots should be sent to all parents and staff members, to be returned to school by the morning of the June Council meeting.

No parent may serve in the same position for more than three consecutive years.

ARTICLE 8 — COMMITTEES

A. **Standing Committees:** The chairs of Standing Committees are part of the Site Council Board and are thus voting positions. As stated in the by-laws, section 4.4.1, Committees may have co-chairs, but if a committee has voting rights according to current Standing Rules, then one co-chair (or other committee member) must be identified as the Officer of the Parent Group from that committee for each meeting.

- 1) Communications Committee
 - maintains the online communication network within Thornton Creek;
 - updates and produces annual directory and oversees its distribution to all new community members;
 - distributes weekly newsletter via email distribution list, website and paper copies to those without computer access.
- 2) Hospitality Committee
 - organize welcoming committee/partners for new families;
 - coordinate snacks and refreshments for 1st Day of School Coffee and monthly parent coffee hours.
 - organize snacks and refreshments for Site Council sponsored evening community meetings.
 - coordinates with room parents for Holiday pies and Teacher Appreciation week
- 3) Curriculum Committee
 - plans and reports curriculum ideas and concerns to the Council;
 - coordinates parent education by organizing evening educational all school events on new curriculum;
 - prepares proposals, monitors, and evaluates ongoing Site Council funded Tutoring program.

- 4) District Relations Committee:
 - follows and reports on proposals made (and under consideration) by the Superintendent, Zone 1 administrators, and School Board.
 - may establish relationships with other groups (e.g. New Option Middle School, Alternative School Coalition, Parents Education Union, etc.) in an effort to address development as part of a larger school's community;
 - responsible for representing Thornton Creek Council views through the development of position papers approved by the full Council;
 - invites District personnel and representatives of other groups as necessary to Council meetings.

- 5) Fundraising Committee:
 - recruits one parent representative from each classroom;
 - plans and coordinates fundraising activities (e.g. special events and sales) to raise funds for Council programs.
 - oversees and assists with volunteer coordination for annual fundraising events.

B. Other Committees: The chairs of the following committees are responsible for carrying out the mission of the Parent Group and Site Council as defined in the committee descriptions, and have the same responsibilities for attendance at Site Council meetings as Standing Committee chairs.

- 1) Finance Committee:
 - prioritizes use of available Council-generated budget after full Council discussion and subject to approval;
 - keeps records of past income and expenditures;
 - provides monthly report to Council from treasurer;
 - prioritizes District budget;
 - coordinates District-allocated, grant, and Council-generated funds to maximize use of all resources.

- 2) Grant Writing Committee
 - researches and pursues available funding and donations sources beyond District and Council budget;

- 3) Recruitment and Hiring Committee:
 - plans and coordinates recruitment of new families and staff members for Thornton Creek, with philosophical compatibility and ethnic/economic diversity as primary goals.
 - coordinates volunteers to attend District training for new employee hiring committees.

4) The Diversity Committee:

- Plans and implements school wide diversity meetings and events for students, families and staff; reports on diversity activities at Site Council meetings;
- Supports staff in the implementation of diversity activities in the classroom;
- Monitors diversity discussions and events happening at the District level and relays information to Site Council;
- Submits regular newsletter articles about diversity activities and events;
- Advisor/Participator of the Hiring Committee and offers insight about issues of diversity during the selection and hiring of candidates.

5) Evaluation Committee

- Conduct on-line end of year survey of parents of how Site Council is doing, how \$ should be spent and what areas need improvement
- Research and evaluate how fundraising dollars are raised and how they are spent, present data to SC as tool for year to year budgeting.
- Making suggestions to Site Council on design of program service assessment and on the design of performance assessments.
- Communicates the assessment design and evaluation results to Site Council
- Makes final program-service adjustment recommendations to Site Council (based on program service evaluation reports)

6) Facilities Committee

- Responsible for the overall building issues and coordination with John and the staff, then separate project chairs could report to Site Council on ongoing activities such as landscaping, as well as special projects: grant for the new playground, mural projects, etc.
- assist John with any security issues or any other building issues that arise (e.g. the lead in the water pipes issue)
- Coordinate volunteers to plan and organize for emergency preparedness and rotate and keep emergency supplies up to date.
- Coordinate volunteers for any building improvements such as mural projects, assembling new playground equipment, etc.
- Work with the landscaping team as a sub-committee; coordinate volunteer needs with the teachers each year for designated classroom sponsorship of each garden area.
- Assemble and gather information on how to work with the district, what forms need to be filled out, what needs permission, etc. for various facility wide volunteer projects.